DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 989 CS 008 579

AUTHOR Covington, Veronica
TITLE Leisure Time Reading versus Television Viewing Time for Seventh Grade Reading Students.
PUB DATE Dec 85
NOTE 26p.; Research Study for ASC 579, Sam Houston State University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; Family Environment; Grade 7; Junior High Schools; Parent Child Relationship; *Reading Achievement; *Reading Habits; *Reading Research; *Recreational Reading; *Television Viewing

ABSTRACT

A study examined the relationship between the amount of time spent on leisure reading, number of books read, time spent watching television, and seventh grade students' reading achievement scores. It was hypothesized that neither reading habits nor television viewing habits would be related to reading achievement scores. A random sample of 39 advanced and 32 regular reading students were surveyed as to their reading and television viewing habits, and their Science Research Associates (SRA) composite reading scores were correlated. The results indicated that students with higher reading achievement scores watched less television and read more books than did students with lower reading scores. Results also showed that parents of advanced students read more often to them and provided them with more books than did the parents of children of regular students. Data showed little difference between boys and girls in the number of books read and time spent either on reading or watching television. Four tables and three histograms are included. (HTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED275989

LEISURE TIME READING VERSUS TELEVISION VIEWING TIME FOR SEVENTH GRADE READING STUDENTS

by

Veronica Covington

A Research Study

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the ASC 579

Sam Houston State University

December 1985

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Veronica Covington

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS008579

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introduction.	1
	General Introduction.	1
	Statement of the Problem.	2
	Purpose	2
	Importance of Study	2
	Limitations and Delimitations	2
	Definition of Terms	3
	Null Hypotheses	3
	Procedures.	3
II.	A Review of Related Literature and Research	4
III.	Reporting the Findings.	7
	Table I	9
	Table II.	10
	Table III	11
	Table IV.	12
	Histogram I	13
	Histogram II.	14
	Histogram III	15
IV.	Analysis and Interpretation of the Data	16
V.	Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations	19
	Summary	19
	Conclusions	19
	Recommendations	19

CHAPTER PAGE

VI. Supporting Divisions 20

Notes. 20

Bibliography 22

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

General Introduction

When television was introduced in the early 1950's parents and teachers had never envisioned that by the 1980's children would have spent some 22,000 hours watching television compared to 11,000 hours in school.[1] Many educators perceive television as a villan and argue that as a result of more viewing time instead of leisure reading time, students' reading scores have decreased.[2] They also argue that if children are watching television, they are obviously not reading, therefore, television viewing "displaces" reading.[3]

Research seems to indicate that there is little or no hard data linking the amount of viewing to academic achievement in general and reading in particular; and that in fact, the children who are the best achievers, who read the most, are also heavy viewers.[4] Research also indicates that the high achiever or gifted child needs to be actively involved in reading and needs guidance in critical reading.[5] Due to these findings, several school districts throughout the nation have incorporated a sustained silent reading program to encourage students at all levels to read more.[6] Joan T. Feeley, associate professor of reading at WM. Paterson College, also encourages parents to try this type of program at home with their children.[7]

Statement of the Problem

Since most of the research seems to indicate that there is little or no relationship between television watching and scholastic achievement, it is difficult to convince some parents of the importance of monitoring the time that their children are involved in television watching and to get their cooperation in encouraging their children to do more lesiure reading.[8]

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to see if there is a relationship between the amount of time spent on leisure reading, the number of books read, the time spent watching television, and the students' reading achievement scores.

Importance of Study

This study will communicate the importance of reading to both students and parents. It will help with the implementation of a new reading program for gifted students that uses a literary approach to the teaching of reading.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

This study was conducted in the Huntsville Independent School District. Of a seventh grade class consisting of 398 students, a total of seventy-one students was involved in the survey.

Delimitations

Seventh grade students from the advanced reading and regular

reading classes were compared. A total of seventy-one students were randomly selected from the fall semester of 1985.

Definition of Terms

Advanced reading students are students who are over-achievers and are in the top eight percent of their class in reading achievement scores. These students started level forty-three of the MacMillan r Series in the fall of 1985.

Regular reading students are students who are reading at grade level on the MacMillan r Series. These students started level thirty-seven in the fall of 1985.

Null Hypotheses

I-There is no relationship between the time spent leisure reading, the number of books a student reads and his reading achievement score.

II-There is no relationship between the time a student spends watching television and his reading achievement score.

Procedures

The study was conducted using two reading groups: advanced and regular reading students. A random sample totalling 71 students from a seventh grade class of 398 students was surveyed and asked questions pertaining to their leisure reading habits, television watching time, number of books read, and their reading achievement scores. Students noted the number of books they had read the previous year, 1984-85. The reading achievement scores were from the spring of 1985.

CHAPTER TWO

A Review of Related Literature and Research

There are many studies on the reading habits of adults and young children through adolescence. The studies on adults tend to emphasize studies among occupational groups and between the socio-economic status of individuals.[9] The studies on younger people tend to compare reading habits to television viewing habits. One study compares the leisure reading habits of suburban children to those of "mountain children". Joyce Rockwood interviewed suburban children and "mountain children," asking them to name their five favorite books. Most of the mountain children had no access to televisions or only watched when they visited relatives or friends whose homes had television. They spent most of their time after school helping with chores and then leisure reading.[10] The suburban children spend very little time leisure reading and the majority spent most of their time watching television.[11] The mountain children easily named their five favorite books and could add readily to the list of favorites while the suburban children could rarely remember the last book they had read.[12] Rockwood concludes, "I feel I can safely say that as a group, these mountain children are much more involved with books than are suburban children as a group."[13]

In another study 198 families of fourth, fifth and sixth grade students were asked to keep a log of the time they spend watching television and the time they spend leisure reading.[14] This particular study focused on the quality of books read while leisure reading.

The variables that were compared were socio-economic status, sex, grade, I.Q., and reading achievement.[15] The results were that the more mature readers tended to be girls ($r = .21$, $p < .05$), intelligent ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) and proficient readers ($r = .28$, $p < .05$).

Michael Morgan did a study in the mid 1970's that attempted to assess some relationship between reading and television viewing for a wide cross-section of socio-economic levels to seek an association between TV and achievement with controls for IQ.[16] The study consisted of a sample of 625 students of which 200 completed two questionnaires per year for three years (from 1974-1977). The results of the study showed that those with lower IQs watch more television and those with higher IQs watch less.[17] Morgan also found that TV viewing is also negatively and significantly related to scores on all eleven achievement test; with strongest association in reading comprehension scores.[18] He countered that "When controlling for IQ, however, most of the observed simple correlations between TV and achievement disappear; the relationship with reading comprehension is also reduced but remains significantly negative."[19] His studies support two propositions, "Television viewing leads to lower score, or the alternative that students with reading problems simply watch more TV."[20]

The National Assessment of Educational Progress conducted a study on the television viewing habits of nine, thirteen, and seventeen year-olds across the country during its 1979-80 assessment of reading skills.[21] The data collected allowed for comparisons of reading skills and television watching, plus homework and leisure time reading.[22] Most of the results were similar to those of Morgan's study, in

particular when IQs were used as a control. It was determined that television may prove more injurious to higher than lower achieving students because data showed a steeper achievement decline with increased television viewing for sixth-graders in higher socioeconomic categories, while students in lower socioeconomic groups showed some gains in achievement as television viewing increased up to three hours a day.[23] One interesting finding was that students who spent one to two hours of spare time reading were the ones that appear to be associated with the highest reading performance within each category of television watching time and therefore, moderate amounts of spare time reading appear to have a favorable impact on reading skills.[24]

Most studies seem to suggest that there is little or no correlation with television viewing habits, leisure reading habits and achievement scores for students that are in the mid IQ range, but that those in the upper and lower extremes are affected in opposite manners. Lower IQ students seem to improve their reading comprehension with more television viewing while higher IQ students seem to lower their comprehension achievement scores with more television viewing time.

CHAPTER THREE

Reporting the Findings

Seventy-one students from a seventh grade class of 398 were asked a series of questions pertaining to their reading habits and their television viewing habits. The students consisted of two groups, advanced and regular. Thirty-nine students were in the advanced group (I), and thirty-two students were in the regular group (II).

The following are the types of questions that the students were asked. The numerical number of each question became the variable number that is represented in the tables.

1. Group I-Advanced II-Regular
2. I-Girl II-Boy
3. Age
4. Average daily hours spent watching television
5. Average daily hours spent leisure reading
6. Books available at home for reading I-Yes II-No
7. Number of magazines to which the family subscribes
8. Number of books student read the previous year
9. Whether parents read to the children when they were younger:
   I-rarely II-often III-quite frequently
10. Scientific Research Associates (SRA) - composite reading achievement scores

Table I indicates the characteristics of the entire sample group. It reports the mean, standard deviation, variance, median, mode,

maximum scores, minimum scores, standard deviation of mean, skewness, and coefficient of variance for each variable.

Table II indicates the Chi square of variable six and nine for the advance group (I) and regular group (II).

Table III indicates t Tests for variables four, five, seven, eight, and ten for the advanced group (I) and regular group (II).

Table IV indicates the frequencies and percentages for variables one, two, six, and nine.

Histogram I - variable four indicates the number of hours students spent watching television.

Histogram II - variable five indicates the number of hours students spent leisure reading.

Histogram III - variable eight indicates the number of books students read the previous year.

TABLE I

Characteristics of Sample Group

There are 10 variables and 71 observations.

Variable	Means	Std. Dev.	Variance
1	1.450704	0.5011054	0.2511066
2	1.507042	0.5035088	0.2535211
3	12.24648	0.4918859	0.2419517
4	3.665493	2.484575	6.173114
5	1.058310	0.9134534	0.8343971
6	1.211268	0.4111132	0.1690141
7	4.307042	3.490285	12.18209
8	31.90845	29.38261	863.3379
9	2.112676	0.7662393	0.5871227
10	78.66197	23.58870	556.4270

Variable	Median	Mode	Maximum	Minimum
1	1.000000	1.000000	2.000000	1.000000
2	2.000000	2.000000	2.000000	1.000000
3	12.000000	12.000000	14.000000	12.000000
4	3.000000	2.000000	16.000000	0.000000
5	1.000000	0.500000	5.000000	0.000000
6	1.000000	1.000000	2.000000	1.000000
7	3.500000	3.000000	15.000000	0.000000
8	23.000000	50.000000	160.000000	1.000000
9	2.000000	2.000000	3.000000	1.000000
10	90.000000	96.000000	99.000000	15.000000

*More than 1 mode exists - only the first is shown.

Variable	Std. Err. of Mean	Skewness	Coef. of Var.
1	0.5947027E-01	0.1981485	34.54222
2	0.5975550E-01	-0.2817185E-01	33.41040
3	0.5837611E-01	1.878417	4.016549
4	0.2948648	2.007718	67.78284
5	0.1084070	1.642823	86.31247
6	0.4879016E-01	1.414635	33.94074
7	0.4142207	1.150927	81.03671
8	3.487075	1.823356	92.08411
9	0.9093588E-01	-0.1916942	36.26866
10	2.799464	-1.035536	29.98743

TABLE II

Chi Squared

*Variable Number	Response Groups I & II			Chi Squared (corrected)	Probability
	I	II			
6	35	21	(yes)	4.77	
	4	11	(no)	(1df)	.03
9	5	12	(rarely)		
	18	11	(often)	5.899	
	16	9	(quite frequently)	(2df)	.05

*6 - Do parents have books available for students to read at home?

9 - When they were young children did their parents read to them?

TABLE III

t Tests

*Variable Number	Group	Size	Mean	Std. Dv.	t score
4	I	39	2.763	1.607	3.668
	II	32	4.766	2.915	.000P
5	I	39	1.168	0.7614	1.121
	II	32	.9244	1.068	.266P
7	I	39	5.482	3.433	3.353
	II	32	2.875	3.035	.001P
8	I	39	40.63	33.46	2.903
	II	32	21.28	19.10	.005P
10	I	39	95.46	3.966	10.77
	II	32	58.19	21.20	.000P

*4 - Hours spent watching television

5 - Hours spent leisure reading

7 - Number of magazines family subscribes to

8 - Number of books student read

10 - SRA reading achievement scores

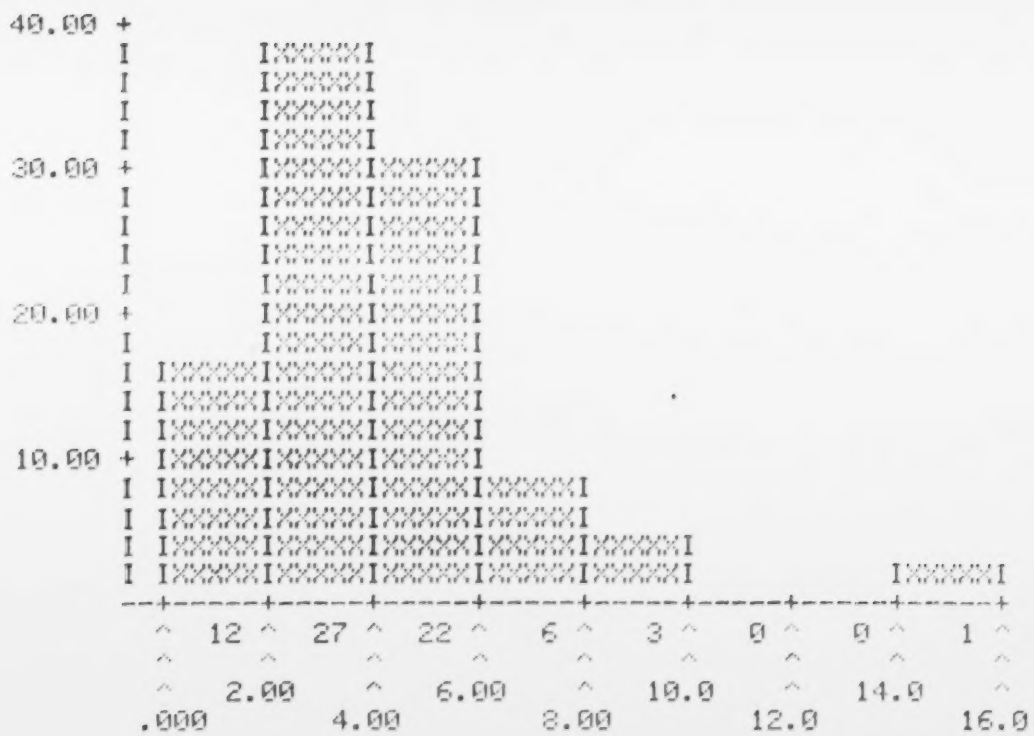
TABLE IV

Frequency and Percentages

*Variable				
1		I-Advance	II-Regular	
	freq.	39	32	
	%	54.9%	45.1%	
2		I-Girl	II-Boy	
	freq.	35	36	
	%	49.3%	50.7%	
6		I-Yes	II-No	
	freq.	56	15	
	%	78.9%	21.1%	
9		I-Rarely	II-Often	III-Quite Frequently
	freq.	16	29	26
	%	22.5	40.8%	36.6%

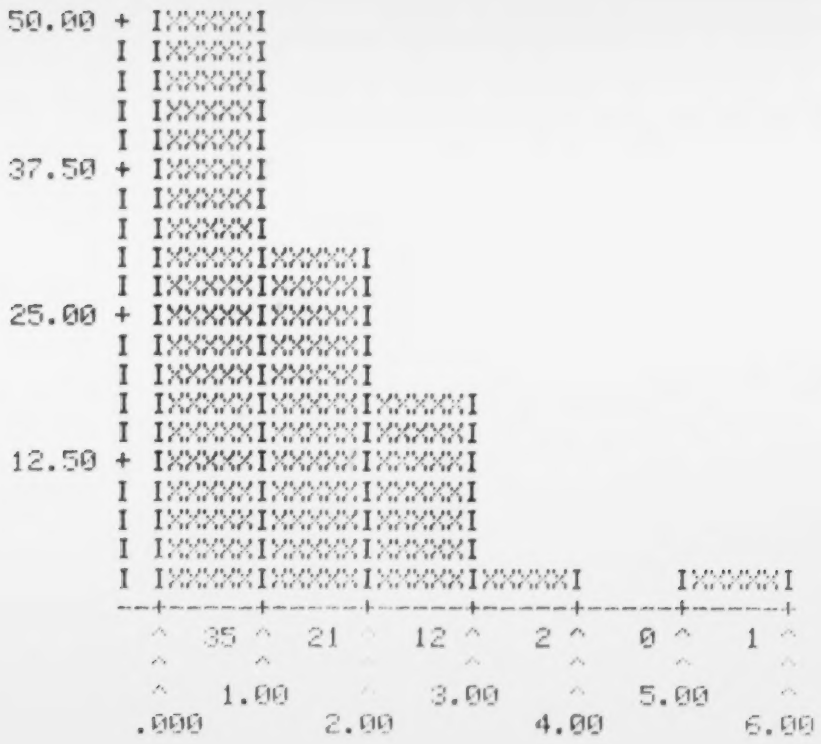
*6 - Do Parents have books available for students to read at home?

9 - When they were young children did their parents read to them?



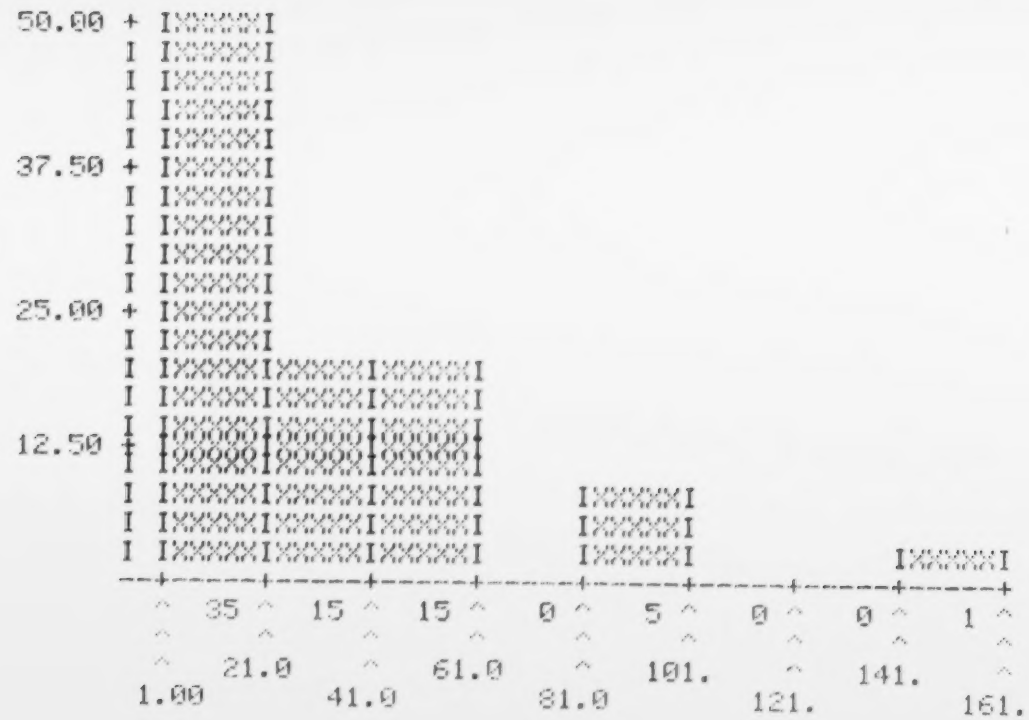
Histogram I - Hours Spent Watching Television (Variable 4)

The vertical numbers on the histogram represent percentages of scores compared to the total. The first row under the graph are the frequencies with the bottom row representing the scores.



Histogram II - Hours Spent Leisure Reading (Variable 5)

The vertical numbers on the histogram represent percentages of scores compared to the total. The first row under the graph are the frequencies with the bottom row representing the scores.



Histogram III - Number of Books Read the Previous Year (Variable 8)

The vertical numbers on the histogram represent percentages of scores compared to the total. The first row under the graph are the frequencies with the bottom row representing the scores.

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The sample group consisted of seventy-one students. Thirty-five of the students were girls, making the sample group 49.3 percent female. Thirty-six of the students were boys, making the sample group 50.7 percent male. The average age of the group was 12.2 years. The mean score on the SRA reading portion of the achievement test was 79.35 percent. Students reported that on a daily average, they spent 3.665 hours watching television and spent 1.05 hours on leisure reading. The vast majority of students, 78.9 percent, had books available for them to read at home. Families of the students subscribed to an average of four magazines. Students read an average of twenty-four books the previous year. Of the students surveyed 22.5 percent indicated that when they were young children, their parents rarely read to them. Students who indicated that their parents often read to them when they were young children totalled 40.8 percent. The students who reported that their parents read quite frequently to them totalled 36.6 percent. (The above data are listed in Table I and IV).

Data indicated that as a group boys and girls in the entire sample group showed little difference in the number of books read the previous year. Boys read an average of thirty-two books, and girls read an average of thirty-one books. Boys read approximately 1.07 hours a day, and girls read 1.04 hours a day. Television watching also showed little difference for boys and girls. Boys watched 3.93 hours a day and girls watched 3.40 hours a day.

The mean SRA achievement score of the advanced group (I) was 95.46. The standard deviation for this group is 3.96. The mean SRA achievement score of the advanced group(I) was 95.46. The standard deviation for this group is 3.96. The mean SRA achievement score for the regular group (II) was 58.19. The standard deviation for this group is 21.20. The t value between these groups is 10.77. It is at the .01 level of significance.

The advanced group (I) averaged reading 40 books a year with a standard deviation of 33.46. The regular group read an average of 21 books a year with a standard deviation of 19.10. The t value between these two groups is 2.90 at the .005 level of significance. Since the t value of 2.90 is at the .005 level of significance, hypothesis I has a high probability of being rejected; that is, there is only .5 percent rick of rejecting due to sampling error.

Students in the advanced group (I) watched an average of 2.76 hours of television a day. The standard deviation for this group is 1.607. The regular group (II) watched an average of 4.76 hours a day. The standard deviation for this group is 2.915. The t value between these groups is 3.668. Since the t value of 3.668 exceeds 2.58, the null hypothesis II may be rejected at the .01 level of significance.

Chi Square between variables one and six supports the rejection of null hypothesis I by indicating that most the parents (eighty-nine percent) of the advanced group (I) provide books for their children to read. While only sixty-six percent of the parents of the regular group (II) provided books. The corrected Chi Square of 4.77 is significant to the .05 level.

The parents of the advanced group also read more to their children when their children were younger. Eighty-seven percent of the students of the advanced group (I) indicated that their parent read often or quite frequently to them. Students in the regular group (II) indicated that only twenty-eight percent of the parents read quite frequently and thirty-four percent of the parent read often to them. Thirty-seven percent of the students of the regular group (II) indicated that their parent rarely read to them, while only twelve percent of the students in the advanced group stated that their parents rarely read to them. The Chi Square for variables one and nine is 5.89 with two degrees of freedom which is significant to the .05 level.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

For the sample group used in this research, data indicate that students with higher reading achievement scores watch less television than students with lower reading achievement scores. Students with higher reading achievement scores also read more books than students with lower reading achievement scores.

Parents of the advanced students read more often to their children than parents of the regular students. Parents of the advanced students also provided their children with more books to read at home than parents of the regular students.

Due to the conclusions stated above, parents should consider monitoring the amount of television their children watch. Parents should also encourage their children to spend more time leisure reading.

If this study was conducted again, it is recommended that several grade levels be used and the sample drawn from several schools in the state of Texas.

The study could also be divided not only by advanced group (I) and regular group (II), but by boys and girls in each group. Further comparisons could be determined and correlations drawn from these.

NOTES

[1]Joan T. Feeley, "TV and Reading: What Can Parents and Teachers Do?" NJEA Review, May 1980, p. 16.

[2]Diana M. Zuckerman, Dorothy G. Singer, and Jerome L. Singer, "Television Viewing, Children's Reading, and Related Classroom Behavior," Journal of Communication, November 1980, p. 166.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Joan T. Feeley, "Children, Television, and Reading," NJEA Review, May 1980, p. 15.

[5]Paul A. Witty, ed., Reading for the Gifted and Creative Student (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971), p. 21.

[6]Edward Summers, An Evaluation of the Effects of a Program of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on Reading Achievement and Attitude Toward Reading (ERIC ED 169 473), p. 1.

[7]Feeley, "TV and Reading," op. cit., p. 19.

[8]Barbara Ward, The Relationship of Students' Academic Achievement to Television Watching, Leisure Time Reading, and Homework, (ERIC ED 236249), p. 1.

[9]Chester W. Harris, "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 1091.

[10]Joyce Rockwood, "Schools Full of Excited Young Reads," Todays Education, November 1979, p. 49.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Susan B. Newman, Television Viewing and Leisure Reading: A Qualitative Analysis (ERIC ED 214 106), p. 3.

[15]Ibid., p. 7

[16]Michael Morgan, "Television Viewing and Reading: Does More Equal Better?" Journal of Communication, November 1980, p. 159.

[17]Ibid., p. 160.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 161.

[21]Ward, op. cit., p. 1.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 2.

[24]Ibid., p. 4.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dorr, Aimee. Reading in the Age of Television. ERIC ED 216 310.

Encyclopedia of Educational Research. Ed. Chester W. Harris, 3rd ed., New York: Macmillan, 1960.

Feeley, Joan T. "Children, Television, and Reading." NJEA Review. May 1980, p. 15.

Feeley, Joan T. "TV and Reading: What Can Parents and Teachers Do?" NJEA Review, May 1980, pp. 15-18.

Morgan, Michael. "Television Viewing and Reading: Does More Equal Better?" Journal of Communication, November 1980, pp. 159-164.

Newman, Susan B. Television Viewing and Leisure Reading: A Qualitative Analysis, ERIC ED 214 106.

Rockwood, Joyce. "Schools Full of Excited Young Readers." Today's Education, November 1979, pp. 49-51.

Summers, Edward. An Evaluation of the Effects of a Program of Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) on Reading Achievement and Attitude Toward Reading in Intermediate Grades. ERIC ED 169 473.

Ward, Barbara. The Relationship of Students' Academic Achievement to Television Watching, Leisure Time, Reading and Homework. ERIC ED 236 249.

Witty, Paul A., Ed. Reading for the Gifted and Creative Student. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971.

Zuckerman, Diana M., Dorothy G. Singer, and Jerome L. Singer. "Television Viewing, Children's Reading, and Related Classroom Behavior." Journal of Communication, November 1980, pp. 166-173.